

## ***The Drill-Nothing Congress***



[Investor's Business Daily](#)

EDITORIAL; Posted Monday, June 09, 2008 4:20 PM PT

Energy: The average price for regular gas hit \$4 a gallon over the weekend. Gas prices have risen 75% since Nancy Pelosi took over. Where's the energy independence Democrats promised two years ago?

In November of 2006, House Speaker-elect Nancy Pelosi issued a press release touting the Democrats' "common-sense plan to help bring down skyrocketing gas prices."

She accused the oil companies of "price gouging." The price of gasoline when the Democrats took control of Congress was around \$2.25 per gallon.

The average price of regular gas crept over the \$4-per-gallon barrier over the weekend, as measured by AAA and the Oil Price Information Service.

That represents a more than 75% increase in the retail price of a gallon of gasoline on Pelosi's watch. Call it the "Pelosi premium" we're all now paying.

It's a problem driven by domestic supply restrictions imposed by the Democratic Congress in the face of growing worldwide demand. The Democrats preach energy independence while they do everything in their power to prevent it. If the American people truly want change, this would be it.

A Gallup poll released in May showed that 57% of the American people wanted the U.S. to drill in coastal and wilderness areas. The percentage of Americans who bought Pelosi's line about price gouging fell from 34% in May 2007 to 20% in May 2008. It could be a winning issue for the Republicans and John McCain.

More than 15 billion barrels of oil have been sent down the Alaskan pipeline from Prudhoe Bay, some 60 miles to the west of ANWR, over the past three decades, much more than the six months' supply expected in the beginning by those who predicted a similar environmental disaster there.

The local caribou and other critters have thrived. Yet, Pelosi and the Democrats want to keep ANWR's estimated 10.6 billion barrels of oil off the market and out of our gas tanks.

Buried in a Department of Interior Appropriations bill passed in December 2007 was an amendment proposed by Rep. Mark Udall, D-Colo., passed by a 219-215 vote in June, that prevented the establishment of regulations for leasing lands to drill for oil shale.

The Western U.S. is estimated to have reserves of a trillion barrels (yes, that's the real number) trapped in porous shale rock, an amount three times the oil reserves of Saudi Arabia. On May 15, 2008, the Senate Appropriations Committee in a 15-14 party line vote rejected an amendment by Sen. Wayne Allard, R-Colo., to allow oil shale drilling and overturn the Udall moratorium.

The U.S. Congress has voted consistently to keep 85% of America's offshore oil and gas off-limits, while China and Cuba drill 60 miles from Key West, Fla. The U.S. Minerals Management Service says that the restricted areas contain 86 billion barrels of oil and 420 trillion cubic feet of natural gas.

There are 3,200 oil rigs off the coast of Louisiana. During Katrina, not a single drop was spilled. More than 7 billion barrels have been pumped from these wells over the past quarter-century, yet only one thousandth of one percent has been spilled.

A study by Louisiana's Sea Grant college shows that there's 50 times more marine life around oil platforms that act as artificial reefs than in the surrounding mud bottoms. Some 85% of Louisiana fishing trips involve fishing around these offshore rigs.

The Flower Garden coral reefs lie off the Louisiana-Texas border. They are surrounded by oil platforms that have been pumping for 50 years.

According to federal biologist G.P. Schmahl, "The Flower Gardens are much healthier, more pristine than anything in the Florida Keys. It was a surprise to me. And I think it's a surprise to most people."

We would suggest that John McCain revisit his reservations about ANWR and run against the drill-nothing Congress. Energy development and the environment are not mutually exclusive.

In fact, we would suggest that the first joint town hall meeting with Barack Obama proposed by McCain be held on one of those offshore Louisiana rigs.